

319

*An Appeal, in behalf
of the Woman's Hospital
in the State of New York.*

By C. R. A

AN APPEAL TO THE BENEVOLENT

IN BEHALF OF THE

WOMAN'S HOSPITAL

IN THE

STATE OF NEW YORK.

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IN BEHALF OF THE

“Woman’s Hospital in the State of New York.”

IN the City of New York, on the plot of ground bounded by Fourth and Lexington Avenues and Forty-ninth and Fiftieth Streets, may be seen the Pavilions of the “WOMAN’S HOSPITAL IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK.” The buildings are of red brick and Lockport limestone. They consist of two pavilion structures, each four stories in height. Upon the grounds near by are three small, wooden, isolated, destructible hospital wards, devoted to such cases as may need the gravest surgical interference and the exclusion of every known cause of hospitalism and infection. The simple purpose of the statement which we are about to make is to show briefly the origin, growth, and some of the necessities of this hospital, that the charitable may be incited to consider the question whether it is not both a duty and a privilege to supply its urgent pecuniary wants.

The treatment of diseases peculiar to women had made but little progress until 1820, when the French physician Récamier inaugurated a new era. A more advanced stage was reached in 1850, through the discoveries of Dr. Simpson, of Edinburgh. A

few years later Dr. J. Marion Sims came to New York, and operated upon difficult cases of a peculiar class of affections to which woman is exposed, and had such extraordinary success that the attention of the medical profession was soon enlisted, and a movement was inaugurated for the establishment in this city of a Hospital exclusively devoted to the treatment of diseases peculiar to woman, where he could teach practically his new surgical methods.

The house No. 83 Madison avenue was rented for the Hospital in May 1855, and it had been open but a few days when all its beds, about thirty in number, were filled. The managers at once perceived that the institution should be enlarged and that its importance had not been overestimated. The same year the *Woman's Hospital Association* was regularly organized, with six surgeons and physicians, the incorporators being the following ladies; Martha Codwise, Margaret R. Astor, V. E. Hoffman, Sarah M. Webster, Charlotte O. Le Roy, and Sarah P. Doremus.

At the first anniversary of the Hospital, held at Clinton Hall on February 9, 1856, it was stated that patients had journeyed painfully from many parts of the country to this promised haven of relief, and had not been disappointed. The expenses were reported to have been about \$4,500, and the receipts only about \$3,000. In the course of a speech made at this meeting Mr. Peter Cooper said:

Mr. President, it is our privilege and our duty to see that suffering woman shall not longer groan in vain. If the importance of this institution can be properly placed before the public, its permanence and enlargement will be insured. From its beginning I have anxiously watched its progress, and the more I have seen and thought of it, the more I am convinced of its necessity and utility to this community and to the country at large. . . . They will be found ready to aid a charity, the success of which affects the welfare, more or less, of every family in the State.

The medical success of the Hospital was such as to encourage its friends to extend its work. A committee appointed at the suggestion of Mr. E. C. Benedict, petitioned the Corporation of the City for a grant of land, whereon to build a hospital, and the valuable lot, 200 feet by 400, where the institution is located at present, was granted.

The plan adopted for the permanent building was that of the Pavilion, as recommended by Drs. Sims and Emmet.

The corner-stone of the building (which is now known as the Wetmore Pavilion, in honor of Apollos R. Wetmore, Esq., the late Vice-President of the Hospital) was laid on May 23d, 1866, by the late James W. Beekman, who for many years was President of the Board of Governors of the Hospital. He then said: "In the name of humanity I lay this corner-stone of the 'Woman's Hospital in the State of New York' to be devoted to the exclusive care of women."

In the meantime the Hospital, from 1862 to 1865, had to struggle for lack of means. In 1862 it would have been closed had it not been for the generosity of the owner of the building then occupied by it, and for that of the Governors. In that year the donations amounted only to \$3,200, and although the income from board reached \$2,800, there was a deficit of \$1,600. The work of the Hospital, however, was as efficient as it could have been under so distressing circumstances. From 1860 to 1866, inclusive, it received and treated seven hundred and eighty-one patients. When the corner-stone of the first building was laid, the Hospital, with but thirty-two beds in its temporary quarters, had discharged one thousand two hundred and twenty cases, completely cured, and there had been performed about four hundred operations of the peculiar kind for which the institution had been especially provided.

Reviewing the work of those years Dr. Emmet said, in 1867:

From this, the first school to which the profession has ever had access for these lesions and injuries, its teachings have spread over the world and its benefits will be incalculable to coming generations. I do not think that I am extravagant when I state that this Hospital has been the instrument of opening a field of observation from which a stock of information is to be gained hereafter, for the profit of the human race, greater than the whole store already accumulated since our professional knowledge was reduced to a science. I mean to say that this institution has prepared the way, that it has offered the means for better observation, through which the physician, by studying cause and effect, can treat a number of diseases formerly unknown; and that our example has been followed and other institutions of the kind are being established in different parts of the world. I do not believe that the professional history can present a parallel in any other direction wherein the advance has been so great as that made during the last twelve years in this branch.

In October, 1867, the new Hospital building was occupied, and soon after the Association was merged into the "Woman's Hospital in the State of New York," incorporated according to the Act of the Legislature of April 18, 1857, amended April 7, 1858. The building cost about \$200,000, and at the opening of 1868 the corporation was \$30,000 in debt. It had, however, seventy-five beds, or more than double the capacity of the provisional Hospital in Madison Avenue. The total number of patients received was 212, or more than double the number received in 1866.

At this period Mr. Henry Young established the first free bed in perpetuity by a donation of \$5,000. In 1869, Mr. J. C. Baldwin, placed \$84,000 at the disposal of the Governors for the building of another Pavilion, thus doubling the capacity of the Hospital.

In 1871, upon the celebrating of its sixteenth anniversary, Dr. T. G. Thomas reviewed the history of its foundation and progress, glanced at its prospective existence, and paid a very

high tribute to the genius of Dr. Sims. "It is the mission of the Woman's Hospital," he said, "to spread abroad, to publish to the world, and to force a recognition to what will do more for the advancement of gynecology than any other discovery which has ever been made, excepting only those of Récamier and Simpson."

Work was begun in January, 1873, upon the Baldwin Pavilion, and a few months later the debt of \$30,000, which was still hanging on the institution, was paid, thanks to a donation of \$25,000 by the Legislature, and to private subscriptions amounting to \$32,800. Thus the Treasurer was enabled to pay that debt and to add about \$25,000 to the Baldwin Fund, already amounting to \$100,000. There were to be raised still for the completion of the building at least \$70,000. This sum was finally raised in 1876, when Mr. J. J. Astor and Mr. W. Astor gave each \$25,000, and other friends \$20,000 more.

The work of the Hospital went on actively. The number of patients received and treated was only limited by the capacity of the building. From 1870 to 1875 their number varied yearly from 230 to 350. But the out-of-door department increased remarkably. In 1872 only 924 consultations were in it. In 1874 they numbered 3,526, and in 1875, 3,509. Dr. Sims resigned from the medical board in December, 1874.

In September, 1877, the new Pavilion was opened, thus providing 135 beds in all, of which 22 are *free*. This building was provided with all the improvements that the experience in the first Pavilion recommended. In their report for 1878, the Board of Governors, then presided over by Hon. E. D. Morgan, who succeeded Mr. Beekman, stated that the institution, although with greatly increased capacity, was still embarrassed by the pressure of applicants for its benefits. The number of surgeons was increased then from four to six, Dr.

Bozeman taking the place of Dr. Peaslee, deceased, and Drs. Noeggerath, Hunter, and Lee having been appointed to the new places. These gentlemen, together with Drs. Emmet and Thomas, are now the six surgeons of the Hospital.*

The government of the Hospital as a corporation is vested in a Board of 27 Governors, in three classes, one renewed yearly for three years' service. Besides a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer, the Governors elect every year five committees, finance, property, legal, on nominations, and on conference. The domestic concerns of the Hospital are managed by a Board of 35 Lady Supervisors, ten of whom are appointed as Managers, with a President, a Vice-President, and a Secretary from their own number. There is, besides, a Ladies' Treasurer elected by the Board of Supervisors.

There are 7 Consulting Physicians and 7 Consulting Surgeons; 6 Attending Surgeons, and 12 Assistant Surgeons; 2 House Surgeons, 2 Assistant House Surgeons, and 2 Junior assistants; a Pathologist and Clinical Registrar, and an Electro-therapeutist, all appointed by the Governors.

The lady managers are Mrs. Lewis C. Jones, *president*, Mrs. J. M. Cooper, *vice-president*, Miss Read, *secretary*, Mrs. Russell Sage, *treasurer*, Mrs. J. B. Trevor, Mrs. D. Torrance, Mrs. C. Abernethy, Mrs. Hugh Dickey; Mrs. G. G. Howland, and Mrs. G. T. M. Davis.

The Supervisors are Mrs. Lloyd Aspinwall, 25 East Tenth street; Mrs. J. J. Astor, 338 Fifth avenue; Mrs. J. H. Beekman, 8 West Tenth street; Mrs. G. W. Cullum; Mrs. Wm. M. Bliss, 29 West Twenty-fourth street; Mrs. Henry Day; Mrs. Jonathan Edwards, 11 West Forty-seventh street; Mrs. Martin E. Greene, 1 West Fiftieth street; Mrs. H. A. Coit; Mrs.

* Dr. Noeggerath has recently resigned.

Fletcher Harper, 14 West Twenty-second street; Mrs. Henry S. Leavitt; Mrs. J. J. Henry, 14 East Tenth street; Mrs. Morris K. Jesup, 197 Madison avenue; Mrs. J. T. Johnston, 8 Fifth avenue; Mrs. Joseph T. Low, 18 East Fortieth street; Mrs. H. L. Morris, Morrisania; Mrs. C. M. McCoskry, 415 Fifth avenue; Mrs. E. D. Morgan, 411 Fifth avenue; Mrs. A. G. Norwood, 236 West Fourteenth street; Mrs. F. N. Otis, 108 West Thirty-fourth street; Mrs. Percy R. Pyne, 25 East Twenty-second street; Mrs. John A. Robinson, 15 East Twenty-second street; Mrs. F. H. Smith, 150 East Thirty-fourth street; Mrs. Samnel Thorne, 9 East Forty-fifth street; Mrs. S. J. Zabriskie, 12 East Thirtieth street.

The Board of Lady Supervisors meet monthly. They appoint the matron and all the female attendants; purchase all the household articles, stores, and supplies. The "Visiting Committee" of the Board of Supervisors visits the Hospital not less than twice a week, and sees that everything is done to promote the comfort of the patients. They also provide for the Sunday religious service.

The present Governors of the Hospital are Messrs. Peter Cooper, J. Taylor Johnston, W. Remsen, J. P. Morgan, John W. Quincy, P. Van Volkenburg, E. D. Morgan (*president*), W. M. Bliss, Chs. N. Talbot (*secretary*), James W. Beekman, C. R. Agnew, Julius Catlin, Jr., G. T. M. Davis, Edmund Dwight, J. Harsen Rhoades, C. A. Bulkley, John E. Parsons, W. H. Webb, Clinton Gilbert (*treasurer*), T. Bailey Myers, J. H. Titus, W. H. Hoppin, Jr., J. Warren Goddard, J. Gautier, George Bliss, and M. C. D. Borden.

This short sketch of the work of the Woman's Hospital will be sufficient to impress upon the mind of all persons benevolently inclined the necessity of aiding it in its two-fold mission—the alleviation of woman's infirmities and the progress of that

particular branch of the science and art of surgery to which it is dedicated. What this Hospital has accomplished may be appreciated by the statement to be found in the annual Report for 1880, viz., that 5,397 women had been admitted to the Hospital's wards, and that 3,480 were returned to their homes entirely relieved. The total number of consultations to out-of-door patients had been 27,175. Last year 1,886 different women availed themselves of the benefits of this Hospital.

As to the scientific value of the Woman's Hospital it is enough to say that the Wetmore Pavilion alone, from its opening, October 15, 1868, up to June 17, 1877—in less than nine years—was visited by 9,423 physicians from all parts of the country. The cases occurring in the practice of the Hospital are carefully recorded, tabulated, and analysed. Said Dr. Thomas at the annual meeting in 1872:

Physicians unfamiliar with the advances made by modern gynecology come here to learn and go hence to develop in practice the suggestions which they receive. Already in various parts of America and Europe those who have received their inspiration here are planting the seed which is to spring up into a more enlightened practice. Thus is this Hospital proving not merely a local sanitarium, but an institution of learning, a school of instruction to other lands.

“Since this Hospital was started,” said Dr. Fordyce Barker, more recently, “the progress made in the diagnosis and treatment of the diseases which are met with here have made this almost a new branch of our profession.”

“The medical and surgical practice of this Hospital,” said Dr. Austin Flint, in 1876, “represents the great progress which, within late years, has been made in gynecology,” a progress to which American physicians have largely contributed.

And yet, with all this prestige, and with the crowning glory of illustrating practically all the advances made in science, and in the art of relieving the peculiar sufferings of women, the

Hospital has never been unembarrassed pecuniarily. Last year's Report shows that the running expenses were, in round numbers, \$37,000, but that the donations, legacies, and subscriptions did not exceed \$8,000.

Such an Institution as the Woman's Hospital should not be hampered by lack of means of maintaining itself in that high degree of efficiency of which it has been giving ample proofs in the twenty-five years of its existence. Sufficient funds should be raised, not only to prevent debts, but to enable the Hospital to extend its facilities to those who are too poor to pay for board, and also to erect the buildings that are so necessary for the economical, humane, and scientific administration, and the accommodation of house-surgeons and nurses, and to keep the buildings it has in a state of adequate sanitary repair.

The Woman's Hospital appeals eloquently to the compassion which women should feel for women, and to the sympathy which it is the privilege of the stronger sex to extend to suffering women. Its usefulness should be kept unimpaired, nay, should be constantly enlarged. And this appeal is made to the charitably inclined in the United States at large, as the benefits of the Hospital have been received by suffering women from Arizona, California, Colorado, and Texas, as well as those States nearer home. No worthier object of charity, no surer method of philanthropy can be offered to men and women than this Hospital, and one can hardly doubt of the result of an appeal for contributions when once its purposes and work are fully set forth.

In 1879 the Hospital owed \$20,000 of pressing debts. The president promised one-half of that sum if the other half were obtained; it was happily subscribed, as the result of his personal efforts, and the pressure for money was for the moment lessened.

But the Hospital is obliged to continue to ask and there is no doubt that the more the benefits that have flowed from it are

known, the more ready and liberal will the contributions of money be from those who wish to aid "to heal the sick."

It needs an endowment fund of at least one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, the interest of which would prevent the constantly recurring embarrassment which arises from forced subscriptions on the part of its officers and others to meet the common daily demands for food, nursing, medicines, and the various other expenses involved in the care of so large a number of suffering and importunate beneficiaries.

Ten thousand dollars are needed immediately to renew the worn-out plumbing of the Wetmore Pavilion, and to make other greatly needed repairs and betterments of the buildings and grounds.

It needs also a considerable sum of money, not less than seventy-five thousand dollars, with which to build a central or administration building. Such a building is essential for the economical management of the hospital. As it is now, the hospital is run at a great disadvantage, the kitchens and other domestic offices are duplicated and separated. The provisions for the house staffs and nurses are entirely inadequate. A stranger calling for information has no central office to which to address his inquiries, and many forms of hospital business are done at extreme disadvantage and extra expense.

It is believed that this appeal will reach enough of benefactors to get for the Hospital Treasury the one hundred and fifty thousand dollars needed immediately for the *endowment fund*, to enlarge the class of those who will subscribe annually to meet pressing current expenses not otherwise provided for, and to induce those who wish to see the Hospital made more complete and economical in its construction, to give towards the seventy-five thousand dollars needed for the purposes of the central building.

Subscriptions should be sent either to Mr. Clinton Gilbert, Treasurer of the Board of Governors, Greenwich Savings Bank, Sixth avenue and Fourth street, New York, or to Mrs. Russell Sage, Treasurer of the Board of Lady Managers, No. 506 Fifth avenue, New York.

An appeal is earnestly made that the great needs of the Hospital should be remembered by persons making their wills, as by thus doing they might extend for all time their help to this most worthy charity.

Contributors should specify which of the objects indicated above they intend their gifts to go to. Undesignated gifts will be applied by the Governors and Lady Managers.

EDWIN D. MORGAN,
President, Board of Governors.

CHARLES N. TALBOT,
Secretary.

ALFRED C. POST, M.D.,
President Medical Board.

JAMES B. HUNTER, M.D.,
Secretary.

MRS. LEWIS C. JONES,
President, Board of Lady Supervisors.

MISS M. READ,
Secretary.

May 25, 1881.

